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KOSSOVO DAY

(1389—1916)



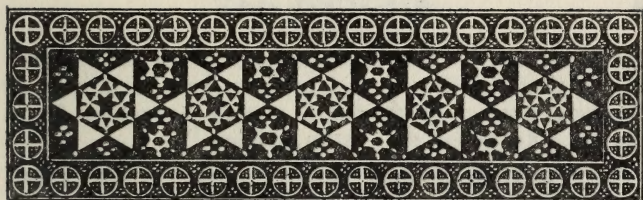
"For Cross and Freedom"

—SERBIAN MOTTO

LONDON :
POLSUE LIMITED, Printers and Publishers
GOUGH HOUSE, GOUGH SQUARE
FLEET STREET, E.C.

L'histoire de ce peuple devrait se
chanter et non s'écrire. C'est un poème
qui s'accomplit encore.

A. DE LAMARTINE,
Voyage en Orient
(Notes sur la Serbie).



PREFATORY NOTE.



N the following pages the English reader will find some descriptions and appreciations of the famous battle of Kossovo. It is doubtless one of the most moving dramas that ever happened in the world's history.

Both Tsar Lazar and Sultan Murad were considered by their respective races as the best men at that time. None of them fought for any material good, but for their faith. On the eve of the battle both of them opened their heart to God and prepared themselves to die a martyr's death.

Tsar Lazar, the leader of the Christians, was a saintly and generous person, but at the same time a wise ruler and excellent general. Among the kings and princes in the Near East no one was more qualified than he to organise and to lead a Crusade against the Turks. While his Bulgarian neighbour, Shishman, knelt obediently before the fierce Turk in Tirnovo, while Venice and Central Europe remained unmoved, and while even some Southern Slav princes failed to come and help, Lazar went out to strike decisively and to sacrifice everything he possessed. His character was meek and conciliatory, but decisive. His honesty was proverbial, his piety on record. A true, idealistic crusader, like Raymound of Toulouse or Prince Dimitrius Donsky!

Sultan Murad I. was one of the greatest Turkish Sultans in history, wise and intrepid : wise like Saladin, and intrepid like Suleiman. He fought for "Allah's cause" as fanatically as the first caliphs did. The religious interests stood for him before all other interests.

He considered himself as an avenger of all the crusades of old that the *Giaours* led in Asia, and he prayed at Kossovo not so much for a victory as rather for a martyr's death for the "true religion."

The Serbian crusade against Islam neither began nor finished with the battle of Kossovo. It began under Tsar Dushan (in the time of the Black Prince in England), whose ally was John Kantakusen, and it has continued since with fluctuating results. In 1371 the Serbian king, Vukashin of Macedonia, lost his life with 60,000 fighters on Maricza river (near Adrianople) resisting Murad's invasion. In 1387 Lazar's army, under the Voivode Milosh Obilich, at Plocnik, near Nish, crushed another Murad's army in such a measure that scarcely a fifth of it escaped. Soon afterwards the Turks suffered a complete *déroute* on the frontier of Montenegro. Then, in 1389, supreme efforts were made on both sides to settle the conflict definitely. The battle of Kossovo was fatal for the Serbs, but still the victors were themselves so exhausted that they only succeeded wholly in conquering Serbia seventy years later (1459).

The Serbian crusade practically never ceased, even during the slavery under the Turkish yoke. It glowed, like a fire under the ashes, during centuries in the form of local rebellions, which were cruelly suffocated in blood, till 1804, when it, under Karageorge, grew into a liberating Revolution, which was a success. Finally, the Serbian crusade against Islam finished under the King Peter and King Nicholas in 1912.

To-day Serbia is downtrodden and enchained by the powerful allies of the fierce Turk : Germans, Magyars, and Bulgars. The Christian Kaisers from Berlin and Vienna started a brutal and merciless crusade against the Serbs, who have been, with all their Southern Slav brothers from Croatia and Slovenia, a protecting *barrière* for them during centuries. Now it is a question which is really the Christian nation : the Serbs, who unsupported fought and suffered horribly for Christianity during five hundred years, or the Germans, who made their glory, allied with Islam, in crushing the little Serbian nation ? There is a Jugoslav proverb, "The sword in the hand of the Turk is less dangerous than the pen in the hand of the Shvaba" (German). It is so. Never has Serbia suffered

in history as she suffers to-day. The Turks conquered Serbia by their real personal heroism; the Germans conquered Serbia recently not by their heroism at all, but by their industry. As a matter of fact Krupp, and not Siegfried, conquered Serbia. While the conquest of Serbia will remain for ever a shame for Germany and their barbaric allies, it will remain for ever in the same degree a new glory for Serbia. In their lucid hours the Germans called Serbia *der Leuchthurm des Ostens** (*the shining tower of the East*). Yet pushed merely by their rough and materialistic instincts, they despised all the ideals with which their ancestors, from Barbarossa the Crusader to Hegel the Philosopher, made so much noise and annoyance in the world. They declared war on Russia and France, and in two years they succeeded in conquering Belgium and Serbia. Is it not like Tartaren, who went to hunt the lions in the forest and killed two cats, and boasted, boasted?

However, suffering Serbia smiles ironically and looks forward hopefully. In her present hour of supreme misery she is inspired by the memory of Kossovo. During 500 years under a criminal *régime* Serbia found always in this memory of Kossovo an immense source of force, virtues, and life. She celebrated Kossovo Day both in the time of darkness, and in the time of light and freedom. Well, at the present moment, suffocated and abased by the Christian Sultans, Serbia will look back towards her greatest day in history, towards Kossovo Day, and will live. The killers of Serbia can find a source for their life and glory only in their iron factories, but Serbia's sources of life will be God's justice and her allies; God's justice for which the saint Tsar Lazar sacrificed his life, and her true and great allies, among whom Kossovo is the oldest and most inspiring one.

* G. Rasch : *Der Leuchthurm des Ostens*, 187

TSAR STEPHEN DUSHAN.

S. Dushan was the greatest Serbian king. He ruled in the time of Edward III. and the famous Black Prince. He routed the Turks wherever he met them. Seeing how incapable Byzance was of resisting the Asiatic invaders, Dushan planned to conquer Constantinople, to stop the Turkish invasion, and to save the Christian Balkans. But he died suddenly in the midst of his successful action. C. Oman says :

“Dushan’s death produced in Byzance not joy but fear. Who will henceforth victoriously resist the Turks? A delegation was sent to Dushan’s wife not only to condole, but to arrange a common action against a common enemy.”

“It would, perhaps, have been well for Christendom if Stephen Dushan had actually conquered Constantinople and made an end of the Empire. In that case there would have been a single great Power in the Balkan Peninsula, ready to meet the oncoming assault of the Turks. But Dushan was not strong enough to take the great city, and to the misfortune of Europe he died in 1355, leaving a realm extending from the Danube to the pass of Thermopylæ.”

C. W. C. OMAN, Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford.
The Byzantine Empire. London, 1892. p. 327-328.

GREECE ASKING HELP FROM SERBIA.

“In 1354 the wise and politic Patriarch Kallistus proceeded to the Serbian Empress (Dushan’s widow) Helene, the mother of the Tsar Urosh, with the proposal, readily accepted by herself, to forget old quarrels (between the Greeks and Serbs) and to unite in joint defence of the two Empires against the fatal danger by which both were equally threatened.”

FELIX KANITZ, Das Königreich Serbien. Leipzig,
1914. p. 141.

THE POPES PREACH A NEW CRUSADE.

*"The army of Lazar took communion
By the beautiful church, Samodreja ;
Thirty monks for a full week were serving,
And the sacrament took every soldier."*

SERBIAN POETRY.*

On September 25, 1371, the Serbian King, Vukashin of Macedonia, with 60,000 fighters, perished in heroic resistance against the Turks on the river of Maritza, Cernomen, near Adrianople.

"The victorious Turks now ranged freely over the field of battle, henceforth called the Srb-sündighi (the Defeat of the Serbians), as far as Albania. The wealthier inhabitants fled to Ragusa, where they were gladly welcomed as citizens. On October 13, 1372, Pope Gregory XI.† bade the Catholic princes established in Greek territory, together with the Kings of Hungary and Sicilia, to a conference at Tiva, in Hellas, for the defence against the common danger ; but his efforts were frustrated by the selfishness of the dynasts, every one of whom—and this applies particularly to the Serbian despots—followed the short-sighted policy of seeking to reap as much personal territorial gain as possible from the momentous calamity."

FELIX KANITZ, Das Königreich Serbien.

Leipzig, 1914.

III., p. 141.

* The Serbian verses quoted in this volume are translated by "O. Meredith" and E. Mijatovich

† The Pope wrote to the Hungarian King Louis on September 14, 1372. Theiner Monumenta Hungar ; II., 115.)

“Sultan Suleiman died before his father, in consequence of a fall from his horse (he was the first Osmanli prince buried in Europe) ; and consequently on Orkhan's death, his younger brother, Murad I., mounted the throne (1359-1389). The latter conquered the whole country from the Hellespont to the Balkan, and made Adrianople the chief seat of his empire. For the first time the Greeks were surrounded in their capital by the same foe both in Europe and Asia. But it was not alone the Greek Empire that was menaced. The appearance of the Mohammedans in regions which had been inaccessible even for the Arabians under the first fervour of Islam was a cause of terror to the adjoining countries, if not to all Europe ; and after *Pope Urban V. had preached a crusade against the Turks* the rulers of Hungary, Serbia, Bosnia and Wallachia united in a war against the common foe.

“The Turks gained, in 1389, a decisive victory on the Amselfield in Serbia ; but Murad fell by the hand of a Serbian noble, by name Milosh Obilich, under circumstances which bear a most romantic tinge.”

THE HISTORIANS' HISTORY OF THE WORLD.

Vol. XXIV., p. 318.

GREAT ARMIES.

*" Oh, my dear brother, Obilich Milosh,
I have been through the Turkish encampments,
Mighty, mighty indeed is their army !
Were all our men changed into salt now,
All the salt would not salt them one dinner.*

*" All his soldiers the Sultan has summoned,
And brought all on the plain of Kossovo.
Like bees are they swarming on Kossovo !
They are crowding the banks of the rivers,
Of both the rivers, Lab and Sitniza,
The Turks as a cloud cover Kossovo."*

SERBIAN POETRY.

" The next morning as soon as it was day Murad put his army in order of battaile, placing his son Baiazet with Eurenoses and Eine-Beg-Subbasha, in the right wing ; his youngest son Yacup, with Sarutze-Pasha, in the left wing ; the maine battell he led himself. Lazarus in the meane time had also set his army in good order : giving the charge of the right wing to Vulcus, his son-in-law ; the left wing was led by the King of Bosna and his son ; in the maine battell stood Lazarus himself ; the Italians, Valachians, Hungarians, Bohemians, and Bulgarians he placed in both wings. It is thought greater armies than these two had seldom before met in Europe."

" Since that time (when Milosh killed Murad) the manner of the Turks has been, and yet is, that when any embassador or stranger is to come to kiss the Sultan's hand, or otherwise to approach his person, he is as it were for honour's sake lead by the armies unto his presence betwixt two of the great courtiers, but indeed by so entangling him to be sure that he shall not offer him the like violence that did this Obilich unto Amurath."

" This Amurath was in his superstition more zealous than any other of the Turkish kings ; a man of great courage, and in all his attempts fortunate : he made greater slaughter of his enemies than both his father and grandfather."

" He was slain when he was threescore eight years old."

RICHARD KNOLLES.

The Turkish History, London, 1603, p. 199-201.

“THE WATERLOO OF THE BALKANS.”

Sultan Murad wrote a letter :—

*“ Listen, Lazarus, chief of the Serbs, to me !
That which never has been, that which never shall be,
Is that two lords one land should sway,
And the same rayas two tributes pay.
Send to me, therefore, the tributes and keys—
The golden keys of each white town ;
And send me a seven years' tribute with these.
But if this thou wilt not do,
Then come thou down over Kossovo ;
On the field of Kossovo come thou down,
That we may divide the land with our swords.”*

SERBIAN POETRY.

The battle at Cernomen under King Voukashin was decisive for Macedonia, where he ruled, but not for all other Serbian countries. W. Miller describes the situation created as follows :

“ The Turks, under the able leadership of Amurath I., one of the greatest generals of his time, continued their career of conquest. Their advance in the direction of Serbia aroused Voukashin's fears for the safety of his throne. Summoning the chieftains together, he implored them to forget their dissensions and join him in a campaign against the Turkish conqueror. An army nearly as large as that which had followed Dushan on his last expedition (towards Constantinople) was collected, and Voukashin believed himself to be the *leader of a new Crusade*. At first his efforts were successful and Amurath received a severe check on the spot, where a few years earlier the Serbs had been routed with such loss. But in the dead of night Amurath surprised the Serbian camp and completely destroyed the army of the Christians.

“ The news of the Serbian defeat excited the greatest alarm all over Christendom. *The Pope* lamented loudly that nothing could withstand the onward march of the

Turks. The Serbians thought that the sole chance of their safety lay in the election of Lazar, a connection by marriage of Dushan's dynasty, in whose wars he had served with great distinction. Lazar, the last of the Serbian Czars, ascended the throne in 1371 under gloomy circumstances. He did not deem it prudent to attack the victorious Turks until he had had time to recruit his scattered forces, and so quietly looked on while Macedonia gradually fell into their hands. But the warlike King of Hungary, instead of assisting his brother of Serbia against the Ottoman armies, seized the opportunity of Serbia's weakness to attack him. For the second time the Serbs repulsed his attempt; but there was little glory or satisfaction to be won from such a triumph at a time when all Christian Powers of the East should have been banded together against the Crescent.

"But at last the Christian states of the Balkans, when too late, discovered that they must unite against the Ottoman power.

"In the fastness of the Black Mountain, where the Turks were in the coming centuries to receive so many fatal reverses, a body of Albanians and Serbs utterly routed the Ottoman force. Amurath I., who was celebrating his marriage in Asia Minor when the news reached him, vowed vengeance. Hurrying back to Europe, he collected an enormous army and marched against the Serbs.

"The battle which was to decide for five centuries the fate of the Balkan Peninsula was fought on the plain of Kossovo, the 'field of blackbirds,' as it is called in Serb, from the flocks of those creatures which frequent it.

"Shut in by a chain of mountains, and of vast extent, the plain seemed intended by Nature for an Armageddon of nations. Around this spot, the *Waterloo of Balkan freedom*, clusters a whole literature of patriotic ballads, from which it is no easy task to discern the true story of that fatal day. The Serbs, Bosniaks and Albanians were banded together in the common cause under Lazar's leadership.

"On the morning of June 28, 1389, the battle began. Amurath had hesitated at the last moment to attack the allied host, but a dream, in which the angel of victory had appeared to his most trusted counsellor and bade

him to 'conquer the infidels,' confirmed his wavering mind. The struggle was furious on both sides, and Lazar held his own against the Ottoman chivalry.

"But there was treachery in the Serbian camp. Vuk Brankovich, to whom one wing of the Serbian army had been entrusted, had long been jealous of his sovereign. It was said that he had already arranged with Amurath to betray his master, and had been promised the crown of Serbia as a reward. The Turkish victory was the result of this 'great betrayal.' At a critical moment, when the fortune of the day was still undecided, the traitor turned his horse's head and rode off the field, followed by his detachment of 12,000 men. Lazar's horse stumbled and fell, and his rider expired beneath the blows of the Turkish soldiers. With him his nine brothers-in-law and the flower of the Serbian aristocracy perished. The victory of the Turks would have been complete but for the death of their own sovereign in the hour of his triumph.

"The battle of Kossovo has never been forgotten in the lands of the Southern Slavs. The most mournful songs of the Serbian muse are inspired by the sad memories of that day. Whenever they have risen against the Turk, the cry of '*Revenge for Kossovo!*' has been emblazoned on their banners, and the Serbs of Montenegro still wear mourning on their caps for that fatal defeat. The Serbian Empire had fallen for ever, though the Turks permitted rulers or 'despots' of Serbia to exercise nominal power for seventy years longer. Many noble families fled to the fastnesses of Montenegro, and maintained their faith and freedom from the Ottoman conquerors amid the impenetrable recesses of the Black Mountain. Others migrated to Hungary, and formed those Serb colonies on the banks of the river Theiss from which, much later, succour came to Serbia in her struggle for independence. A third body of emigrants found a home in Bosnia, whose rulers had not yet fallen beneath the sway of the all-conquering Turks.

"The Sultan Bajazet did not pursue his conquests farther after the battle of Kossovo. His own army had suffered severely, and he permitted Stephen Lazarevic, son of the dead Czar, to reign over Serbia on condition that he became his vassal.

“ Thus fell the once mighty Serbian State. Lack of unity, alike in politics and religion, was the chief cause of its fall. The feudal system, which allowed the great nobles almost royal power in their own dominions, weakened the central authority and rendered it liable to defeat at the hands of a Turkish autocrat who took care to remove every rival out of his path. It was only when a strong man, like Dushan, was on the throne, or when, as happened after the death of Bajazet, a civil war broke out among the Turks, that Serbia was secure. The mutual jealousies of the Christian rulers of Serbia and Hungary hindered, except on rare occasions, a really effective alliance for the common cause. The Serbs, firmly attached to the Greek Church, suspected the Magyars, who came to assist them, of desiring to introduce the Roman Catholic faith. Throughout the history of the Balkans this distinction of creeds proved a real obstacle to a political union. It was so in Serbia, it was so in Bosnia, and we shall see it to be the same in Montenegro and Albania. Well organised, strongly united in their devotion to their leader and their religion, the Turks had little difficulty in overthrowing the brave Serbian nation, which at one moment had seemed likely to combine all the Balkan lands under a Czar of its own, with Constantinople as its capital.”

WILLIAM MILLER, *The Balkans*, p. 283, etc.

A FRATRICIDE:

The great German historian, Herzberg, describes the battle of Kossovo in these words :

“ For a long time both sides fought with great valour, but without perceptible success. Then, when a furious onslaught of the Serbian knights overthrew the left wing of the Turks, it was Bajazet’s intrepid valour which arrested the progress of the Slavs and finally, amidst murderous carnage, gained the victory for the Turkish standard. Still, Islam had paid most dearly for this triumph ; Murad, too, was numbered among the slain. But the strength of the Southern Slavs was broken, and the Serbs had to mourn the death of their noble king, Lazar.

“ The heroes of this battle have never been forgotten by their peoples. The memory of the aged Lazar lived on in the songs of the Serbs, who finally laid his ashes to rest in the Ravanica monastery in the Syrmian Fruska Gora. The Osmanli, on their part, raised a chapel and a mausoleum in honour of Murad on the battlefield, but bore his body to Broussa, where it was interred in a mosque which had been built by the Sultan. Simultaneously another male member of his house found his last resting-place there. This was his younger son, *Yakoub*, whom the new Sultan, Bajazet, had immediately caused to be strangled during the return from the pursuit after the flying Slavs. Thus for the first time, immediately after a glorious victory and under most abominable circumstances, the infamous policy of fratricide was adopted, a policy which was henceforth for many generations to sully the honour and glory of so many illustrious princes of the house of Osman with innocent blood.”

DR. G. F. HERZBERG, *Geschichte der Byzantiner und des Osmanischen Reiches*. Berlin, 1883, p. 506-7.

KOSSOVO—"LIKE A TULIP BED."

*" Fallen, fallen, fallen are
The Turkish and the Christian Tsar.
Of the Turks is nothing left ;
Of the Serbs a remnant rests,
Hackt and hewn, carved and cleft,
Broken shields, and bloody breasts."*

SERBIAN POETRY.

It was a bloody battle, one of the most bloody battles between the Crusaders and the Moslems in history.

" Sultan Murad's general, Ali-Pasha, crossed the Balkan by the Derbend Pass, descended upon Shumla, seized Tirnova, and brought Sisman, the King of Bulgaria, to his knees. Besieged in Nicopolis, the prince surrendered, and Bulgaria was immediately annexed to the Ottoman Empire, of which the Danube now formed the northern frontier.

" Lazarus the Serbian, though deprived of his Bulgarian ally, was not yet daunted. He challenged Murad to battle, and the opposing forces met (1389) on the plain of Kossovo by the banks of the river Sitnitza. Serbs, Bosnians, Skipitars, Poles, Magyars, Vlachs were massed on the north side of the stream ; on the south were the Ottomans under Murad himself, supported by his vassals and allies of Europe and Asia. The Sultan spent the night before the battle in prayer for the help of God and a martyr's death, for, like all true Moslems, he coveted the crowning glory of dying in fight with the Infidels ; and in the morning he saw an answer to his petitions in the rain which laid the clouds of dust that were driving blindingly in the faces of the Turkish troops. When the sky cleared, the two armies came forward and were drawn up in battle array.

" Lazarus commanded the centre of the Christian line, his nephew, Vuk Brankovich, the right ; and Tvertko, the King of Bosnia, the left. On the Turkish side Murad himself was in the centre, his sons Bayazid and Yakub commanded the right and left wings, and

Haydar ranged his artillery on the brow of the hill behind the main body.

"The battle was long and obstinately contested. At one time the left wing of the Turks wavered, but its courage was restored by the charge of Bayazed, whose rapidity of action had earned him the name of *Yilderim* ("Thunderbolt"). He raged through the ranks of the enemy, brandishing a mighty iron mace and felling all who came in his way. With such fury did he renew the fight that the Turks, which before as men discouraged fled in the left wing, began now to turn again upon their enemies; and the Christians, having as they thought already got the victory, were to begin a great battle, in which bloody fight many thousands fell on both sides. The brightness of the armour and weapons was as it had been the lightning; the multitude of the lances and other horsemen's staves shadowed the light of the sun; arrows and darts fell so fast that a man would have thought they had poured down from heaven; the noise of the instruments of war, with the neighing of horses and the outcries of men, were so terrible and great, that the wild beasts of the mountain were astonished therewith; and the Turkish histories, to express the terror of the day, vainly say that the angels in heaven, amazed with that hideous noise, for that time forgot the heavenly hymns wherewith they always glorify God. About noontide of the day, the fortune of the Turks prevailing, the Christians began to give ground, and at length betook themselves to plain flight: whom the Turks with all their force pursued and slew them downright, without number or mercy." * The field, says the Turkish chronicler, was like a *tulip bed*, with its ruddy severed heads and rolling turbans.

STANLEY LANE-POOLE, late Professor of Arabic in the University Dublin.

Turkey, p. 42-44.

* Knowles and Rycart: The Turkish History, I. 138.

A FAITHLESS ALLY.

Whether the Hungarians took part in the battle of Kossovo or not is still uncertain, but it is certain that as soon as the battle was over they took opportunity to occupy Belgrad and Machva. The Russian historian, Pogodin, says :

“Lazar was surrounded and taken prisoner. It produced a great excitement among the Serbians ; some of them thought to fly, but the others rushed forward against the Turks in order to save the king. The Turks beheaded Tzar Lazar, and his body was buried in the church Gracaniza, on the field of Kossovo, and afterwards it has been transferred to Ravaniza, where it is still. The Serbian Church recognised the last independent Serbian ruler as a saint and martyr, and the national theatre celebrates his memory as such to-day.

“The Hungarian king, Sigismund, misusing the defeat of Serbia, had no scruples about breaking the treaty, signed not long before, and taking from Serbia Belgrad and Machva. The contemporary chronicler complains : Not only the Turks, but the Hungarians and several others, invaded Serbia so as to devastate, plunder and destroy her.”

Prof. A. L. POGODIN,
Istoria Serbii. St. Petersburg, 1909, p. 85-86.

“KOSSOVO—LA VICTOIRE MORALE.”

*“Hast not thou heard the curses Lazar spoke
On all who should fail him on Kossovo?—
To the traitor may nothing e'er prosper!
In his fields may no white wheat e'er ripen!
In his vineyards may the red grape fail him!
May no child e'er grow up in his household!
May no child from his own heart be borne him!
All his life long may evil be with him!”*

SERBIAN POETRY.

“Un noble serbe, Milosh, s'étant lancé fort en avant parmi les Turcs, la retraite coupée, poussa jusqu'au sultan et le poignarda. Après des prodiges de valeur, Lazare et plusieurs des siens furent faits prisonniers. On les décapita immédiatement après la bataille.

“La bataille sanglante et furieuse, l'action héroïque de Milosh, la mort de Mourad et de Lazare, le fait que ce dernier avait réussi à grouper toutes les forces des Balkans contre les Turcs, tout cela frappa l'imagination des peuples, si bien que la défaite des Serbes tourna dans la suite à la victoire morale et en eut les conséquences. Les poètes improvisateurs s'emparèrent de ce thème héroïque, l'embellirent de tout ce que purent leur inspirer l'imagination et le patriotisme, divinisèrent pour ainsi dire cette mémorable journée. Lazare, ‘couronne d'or de la Serbie,’ n'est pas tombé seulement pour la patrie ; il est mort martyr volontaire de la foi.

“Les poèmes ainsi créés furent chantés par tous les Serbes : ils nourrirent et soutinrent leur patriotisme dans la longue servitude qui suivit.”

LAVISSE ET RAMBAUD, Histoire Général,

Tome III., 917.

SULTAN BAYAZED'S TESTIMONY.

Sultan Bayazed : a firman to the Kadhi of Brussa, Suleiman-beg, dated the month of Shaban, 791, i.e., 1389. This firman is preserved in Constantinople in the archives of the State.

“ When this my firman comes into your hands ” (wrote the Sultan) “ you ought to know that there was in accordance with Allah’s will the battle on the field of Kossovo. My father, Sultan Murad, whose life had been happy and death was that of a martyr, prayed after a vision in a dream to Allah to make him worthy of martyrdom. The battle being ended, he returned unhurt in his full health from the battlefield to the tent, which was elevated towards the heavens. And while we enjoyed the greatest pleasure in seeing how the cut heads of the Christian dukes rolled under the horses’ hoofs, and how many of them with tied hands and others with broken legs stood, suddenly appeared a fighter, by name Milosh Obilich. He came perfidiously saying that he accepted Islam and asking that he might so be ranked in the victorious army. And when he after his own wish was allowed to kiss the feet of the illustrious Sultan, he drew a poisonous hanjar (knife) hidden in his sleeve, and boldly thrust it into the body of the Sultan, sorely wounding him. Well, he caused the illustrious Sultan to drink the sherbet of martyrdom. . . . After Milosh finished this deed he tried to escape through the soldiers who shone like the stars in the sky, but by them he was caught and cut in pieces.

“ Having been informed about this event I came to the martyr bed, but I found the Sultan dead. At the same time it happened that my brother, Yakub, departed into eternity. I am sending the shining body of my father there (to Brussa) to be buried. Well, when the corpse arrives there you ought to bury it in secrecy without informing anybody about the real event. On the contrary make you busy in shewing to the people all the signs of victory in order not to make our enemies suspect anything.”

AN ANTIQUE DESCRIPTION.

Eodem tempore cepit Gazes Murates Chan bellum cum Lazaro gerere. Quippe Lazarus praepotenti coacto exercitu, et iam in Cosouae campos cum suis progressus, Murati per internuntium dici iussit, in aciem modo prodiret : adpariturum facile, cui cessura sit victoria. Murates ex altera parte, summa diligentia, conscripto milite, ambos etiam filios, Baiazitem cognomine Gilderunem, et Yacupem Zelebim, ea sibi expeditione adiunxit. Posteaquam in Cosouae campos uterque conuenisset exercitus, acri dimicatum utrimque proelio. Ibitum Christianus quidam ad Muratem transfugit, cum significatione voluntatis suae, quasi si militare deinceps ei cuperet. Igitur ad Muratem deductus, uti pro more pedes eius oscularetur, quam sub veste abditam gestabat sicam, ea vi Muratis in ventrem adegit : ut si tam diro vulnere confectus, expiraret. Turcici vero proceres, hac Sultani sui caede conspecta, mox consultationem instituunt, et quid hoc casu tam repentino faciundum deliberantes, in eam conuenere sententiam, ut ad se Yacupem Zelebim arcesserent. Is ubi vocatus comparuisset : Age, inquiunt, tentorium paternum ingredi. Nam est, quot te vult pater. Ille nihil mali suspicatus, ingreditur : et correptus ab eis, necatur. Inde regio solio Gilderun Baiasites impositus, omniu suffragiis imperator salutatur. Quibus peractis, denuo ceptum pugnari fortiter : adeo quidem, ut victus eo proelio, captusque Lazarus, in conspectu Baiasitis frustulatim concisus fuerit. His rebus gestis, ex eo loco discessum, et Hadrianopolim versus instituta profectio. Erat is annus DCCXCI.*''

JOANNES LEUNCLAVIUS NOBILIS, Annales Sultanorum Otomanidorum a Turcis sua Lingua Scripti.

MDXCVI., Francofurdi.

* According to the Turkish calendar.

A VENETIAN REPORT.

“ Amurath figliuolo d’Orchana fu molto maggior del Padre, e dell’ Auo Costui chiamato dal Paleologo in suo aiuto, occupo Callipoli, e mosse l’armi contra il Paleologo. Entra to poi nella Servia e nella Bulgaria, prese Andrino-poli : e ruppe l’essercito di Lazaro Principe della Servia : un servitor dal quale uccise Amurath, l’anno 23 del suo Regno.”

F. SANSOVINO, Sommario et alboro delli Principi Ottomani.

Venezia, 1567.

RAGUSA’S REPORT.

“ On Tuesday, 28 june, 1389, St. Veit’s day, took place the great battle between the Serbs and the Turkish Sultan. Among the Serbs were : Lazar, the Serbian king, Vuk Brankovich Vlatko Vukovich, the dukes. The losses were terrible on both sides ; both Sultan Murat and the Serbian king are killed. Neither the Turks nor Serbians won, because of their losses. The battle happened on the field of Kossovo.”

Monumenta Spectantia Historiam Slav. Mer.

XV., 48.

FRIGHTENED VENICE.

“ The frightened Venetians sent on the 23 july, 1389, to Adrianople a messenger to tell to the new Sultan that they had heard about a battle between the powerful Sultan Murad, the father of the present Sultan, and King Lazar, and about death of Sultan Murad, because for which we are in great mourning.”

RACKI, Rad iugosl. Accadem. Kn. XCLII., 33.

FLORENCE IN ILLUSION.

The community in Florence, ill-informed about the issue of the battle of Kossovo, wrote to the Bosnian King Tvertko :

“Blessed be the field of such a defeat and such an eternal monument of victory ! Blessed the kingdom of Bosnia, whose part was such a glorious war and such a victory won by the right hand of Christ. Blessed also the day of the saint martyr, Veit !”

RACKI, Rad. iugosl. Accadem. Kn. XCLII., p. 34.

THE ALLIANCE OF THE CHRISTIAN KINGS.

There is a Turkish prayer always repeated by the true believers : “Allah, do not unite the Giaours !”

Murad hastened to Kossovo because he feared a solid Christian unity, which was in sight of being realised.

“As a matter of fact Sultan Murad was somehow informed that King Lazar worked to realise a Christian league against the Turks, and that he tried to bring Hungary in, too. For the Porte it was clear that it must not lose time. It was clear that the elements of this league must be destroyed before the league was created and confirmed. The Porte could not allow Lazar’s programme to ripen into a practical result, and Murad came to the field of Kossovo so as to hinder it. The true sense and importance of the battle of Kossovo was obvious and made on the Turks an undivided impression, which their historians shared themselves, i.e., that Murad defeated on the field of Kossovo *the alliance of the Christian Kings.*”

C. MIJATOVICH, the member of the Serbian Academy of Science, the former Serbian Minister on the Court of St. James’s. George Brankovich. I., 6.

HEROISM CRUSHED BY NUMBERS.

*"Milosh fell,
Pursued by myriads down the dell."*
SERBIAN POETRY.

It is difficult to find out how big were the armies in the battle of Kossovo. But all the chroniclers and historians agree that the number of the Turkish troops much surpassed the number of the Christians.

"In the middle of the XIV. century the Turks from Asia Minor took the European provinces of the Byzantine Empire : they proceeded then through the valley of Vardar to the very heart of the Serbian land, to the field of Kossovo, le Champ des Merles. At the battle of Kossovo (1389) Serbian heroism was crushed by numbers. The Turks conquered the whole of Serbia and soon afterwards Hungary, both the South and the North, all the valley of the Danube nearly to Vienna. During the next four centuries (1400-1804) Serbia suffered massacre and pillage."

VICTOR BERARD, *La Serbie.*

Paris, 1915. p. 13.

“THE BULWARK OF WESTERN EUROPE.”

*“There resteth to Serbia a glory,
A glory that shall not grow old ;
There remains to Serbia a story,
A tale to be chanted and told !*

*“So long as the grass shall grow
On the mighty plain of Kossovo—
So long, so long, even so,
Shall the glory of those remain
Who this day in battle were slain.”*

SERBIAN POETRY.

Here is the wonderful description of the battle of Kossovo by the great Lamartine, one of the best authorities on Turkish history.

“At sunset, a violent westerly wind, which blew clouds of dust in the faces of the Turks, made the Sultan anxious. He feared that these clouds of dust would blind his soldiers and his horses in the battle. He spent part of the night in prayer, within his tent, convinced that, for his descendants, the conquest or the loss of Europe would depend upon the day that was about to dawn. He fervently prayed to heaven that he might die in the battle, victorious, but a martyr to the faith.

“I have sufficient glory here below,” he said ; “there is nothing left for me to desire but the eternal bliss of the elect who die for the cause of the Prophet. Let this be the price of my blood.” After his prayer he fell asleep. When he awoke, the night rain had laid the wind and the dust, and through the transparent haze the sun was shining on the white walls of the Christian villages perched on the Albanian mountains.

Lazar (King of the Serbians), Tvertko (King of the Bosnians), and John Castriot (Chief of the Albanians and father of the hero Skanderbeg), believing themselves sure of victory, both on account of numbers and of their position, had before the dawn disposed their forces in the shape of a crescent, in order to envelop the Turks after

repulsing their fruitless attack. They were so confident of victory that they deferred the attack until daybreak, for fear lest the darkness should favour the flight of the Osmanli.

Their first surprise was to see the Sultan himself dashing forward at the head of the centre of his army to attack their entrenchments. Their advanced forces then closed in like two vast wings to envelop him on either flank while they received his frontal attack. His son, Yakoub, who hastened to his father's assistance with the left flank, gave ground before the pressure of the Christian hosts, and in giving ground exposed the Turkish centre. Bayazet, who had remained stationary until then, now, with his cavalry at the gallop, crossed the plain, which was already covered by the Albanian cavalry, which was charging Yakoub and surrounding his father.

“ ‘ He was armed,’ says the historian and eye-witness, ‘ and fought beside him in the *mélée* ; he was armed with his heavy mace, which he brandished like a hammer, splitting enemy helmets. The Ormanli, encouraged by his example, clove through the confused multitude of their enemies and flew to the assistance of Yakoub and their Sultan. The blades of their sabres, which flashed like diamonds, became red as hyacinths.’ ”

“ As a matter of fact, the Serbians were not behind the Turks in intrepidity. They did not yield to Amurat save by dying at his feet on the field of battle. The number of their dead proved that not one of them had fled. Only the wounded, weltering in their blood, implored swift death from their conquerors rather than life. This people had a stubborn heart which could be broken but not bent—like the heart of the oaks in their forest. This day was to afford proof of this to Amurat. He had vanquished everything except the patriotism of a wounded Serbian whom the spahis dragged into the Sultan's tent.”

It was Milos Obilich.

* * * * *

“ Next morning, Milos, mounted on his fierce charger, fought like a hero so long as there was a group of Serbians upright on the plain. He was wounded in the *mélée*, but the loss of blood had not drained his courage. After the battle he went down to the river, swam across, tied

his horse to an oak on the river bank, and, approaching Amurat's tent as though he were a deserter, craved leave to kiss the dust on the Sultan's feet. The Sultan, proud of the homage of the King's own son-in-law, caused the curtain of his tent to be raised and ordered the wounded Serbian to be brought before him. The Tchaush, or guards of the Sultan, obeyed. Milos prostrated himself on the floor of the tent, took Amurat's foot in one of his hands as if to raise it to his lips, thus drawing the body of the Sultan nearer to himself, and with his right hand drawing a dagger which was concealed in his bosom, he plunged the steel into Amurat's body.

"Amurat cried out; the Tchaush threw themselves on the assassin. Milos leapt to his feet, brandished his weapon, stretched eight of the guards at his feet, dashed out of the tent, reached his horse, mounted him, and had safely gained the Serbian shore, when Bayazet's horsemen, joining in the pursuit, plunged into the river, overtook him and slew him on the bank, thus avenging the blood of Amurat.

"Amurat, although mortally wounded and having no hope of ought but the eternal bliss of the martyr, in the belief that he was avenging himself upon the instigator of his death, before expiring ordered the execution of Lazar, the King of the Serbians, whom one of his horsemen brought a prisoner to his tent. Lazar knew nothing of the assassination of Amurat by his son-in-law Milos till he beheld the Sultan bathed in blood and heard the order for his own execution. Too late he recognised the fidelity of the Serbian patriot who had sacrificed his life, and even his honour, in order to justify himself eternally before his race.

" 'Great God ! ' cried Lazar, surrendering himself to the executioners and clasping his hands as if to render thanks—' Great God ! Thou mayest now call me unto Thee, since Thou hast permitted me to behold the enemy of my faith, my people and my kindred dying before my eyes by the hand of a warrior I had unjustly suspected ! '

"His head fell at the door of the Sultan's tent, with the heads of all his kinsmen and all the nobles who were taken with him in their flight. Revenge made the Sons of Amurat implacable. Both victors and vanquished

were plunged in mourning. Of the two sovereigns, dead at the same instant on the same field of slaughter, one left the vanquished without hope, and the other the victors without joy. For three days the plain of Kossovo saw nought but funerals. *The Bulwark of Western Europe had fallen with Lazar* ; but the Osmanli had no Sultan who, on the shores of the Danube and the Adriatic, could carry out the plans of Amurat, cut off in the midst of his career.

“The sacrifice of Milos gave breathing space to his unfortunate country. Henceforth his name was to the Serbians what the name of Judith is to the Jews and that of Harmodius to the Greeks.”

“Milos—*a new Scaevola*”—exclaims Henri Thiers.*

A. DE LAMARTINE : Histoire de la Turquie.

Book V., 29.

* Henri Thiers : La Serbie, son passé et son avenir. Paris, 1876, p. 68.

TWO TYPICAL GERMAN PRAYERS AGAINST THE TURKS.*

I.

DR. MARTIN LUTHER.

“We have sinned against thee and we have not obeyed thy commandments, but thou knowest, O Almighty God the Father, that we have not sinned against the *Teufel*, *Bapst* und *Turken*: therefore they have no right or might to punish us.”

II.

DR. JOH. HAB.

“O Almighty God, protect us from the tyranny of the Turk and his great power. Thou seest how he has taken thy heritage and how he tries to pollute thy Church and to make a stone ruin of our cities. He has given the dead corpses of thy servants to be the food of the birds and the flesh of thy holy ones to the beasts in the field. He has poured Christian blood like water, and there was no one to bury the dead.” Compare it with the present time! What a change!

* *Gebet wider den Turken*, printed in 1517. It can be found in the British Museum under the title, “German Poetry and Tracts,” 11515, a 51.

THE MAIDEN OF KOSSOVO.

(After the Battle.)

The Serbian Ballad, translated by E. L. Mijatovich.

The maiden of Kossovo rose early
On the Sabbath morn, sooner than sunrise ;
From her round arms she turned back the white sleeves,
Turned them backward above the white elbows.
On her shoulders a bag was with white bread—
And in her hands were two golden vessels ;
One vessel was fresh filled with cool water,
The other to the brim was with red wine.

She went straight to the Plain of Kossovo
And sadly walked over the battlefield
Where the glorious Czar Lazar had fallen.
In the blood-pools she turned round the heroes,
And if she found still one of them breathing
She bathed him gently with clear cold water ;
As sacrament she gave him the red wine,
And fed him with small crumbs of the white bread.

In her wanderings she came, God guided,
To the brave young knight, Orlovich Pavlo :
He who carried the Czar Lazar's standard.
She found him yet alive, and still conscious,
Though the right arm was slash'd from the shoulder,
And the left leg cut off from the knee-joint—
Yet alive, though his ribs all were broken,
And his lungs were laid bare to the daylight !

She drew him forth from a blood-lake,
She bathed him softly with clear, cold water ;
Then she gave him to drink of the red wine,
And fed him with small crumbs of the white bread.

When his heart beatings grew somewhat stronger,
Said brave Orlovich faint to the maiden :

“ My sister, thou, maiden of Kossovo,
Tell me what is the dire need which drives thee
To move brave men in midst of their life-blood ?
Whom seekest thou, so young, in this red field ?
A brother ? Or the son of a brother ?
Or is it thy old father thou seekest ? ”

Then the maiden of Kossovo answered :

“ Dear brother ! dear thou art though a stranger,
I am seeking here none of my kindred ;
Neither brother nor son of a brother—
I seek not even my own old father !
To thee it must be known, O strange Vojvode,
When all the Czar’s men took communion
In the beautiful church Samodreja,
The whole army took there communion.

“ Last of all came three valiant Vojvodes,
Obilich Milosh, Kosanchich Ivan,
And the third one, Milan of Topliza.
Three noble Vojvodes ! three of the noblest !
They never had their equals in this world !
When they walk’d their swords rung on the pavement,
On their heads they wore kalpaks of pure silk,
Round their shoulders hung long chains of gold links,
On their necks they wore kerchiefs of silk cloth ;
They wore also gold rings on their fingers.

“ When the Obilich Milosh passed by me,
He gave me for a present his gold chain ;
When the Kosanchich Ivan passed by me,
He gave me for a present his gold ring ;
But when Milan of Topliza passed by,
He gave to me his fine glove of gold thread ;
And he marked me thereby for his true love.
These seek I to-day on the battlefield.”

Said again to her Orlovich Pavlo :
“ My dear sister, maiden of Kossovo,
Dost thou not see there those broken war spears ?
The last life-blood of heroes has flowed there !
Flowed high up as the stirrups of war steeds !
It has reached to the belts of the footmen !
It is *there* thy three heroes have fallen !
But go back to thy white house, my sister !
Stain not thus thy white skirts and thy white sleeves.”

When the maiden of Kossovo heard him,
The great tears fell fast over her white cheeks.
She went back to the house of her father ;
Wildly weeping she went back, and wailing,
“ Woe to me ! What ill-luck has befallen me !
Oh, were I but to touch the green pine tree,
The green tree at my sad touch would wither.”

CONTEMPORARIES OF THE BATTLE OF KOSSOVO.

In England ...	...	Richard II.
„ France ...	...	Charles VI.
„ Russia ...	...	Dmitri Donsky.
„ Scotland ...	...	Robert II.
„ Rome ...	...	Urban VI.
„ Constantinople ...	...	John Paleologue.
„ Poland ...	...	Ladislaus Iagiello.
„ Norway ...	...	Margaret and Erik.
„ Hungary ...	...	Sigismund.
„ Bohemia ...	...	Wenzeslaus.
„ Venice ...	...	Doge Antonio Venier.
„ Spain ...	...	The Moors.
„ Switzerland ...	...	Liberation from Austria after the victories at <i>Sempach</i> and <i>Naefels</i> .

amph
Mod.

Kosovo-day (1389-1916).

DATE.

NAME OF BORROWER.

